

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8420

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

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AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO

S E C R E T TEGUCIGALPA 4592

LIMDIS

GUATEMALA PASS ROCAP

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, ES, HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4449

BEGIN SUMMARY: TODAY, OCTOBER 24, 1974, HONDURAN CHIEF OF STATE GENERAL OSWALDO LOPEZ ARELLANO TOLD ME THAT WITH THE APPARENT RELUCTANCE OF THE GOH TO ACCEPT ANY MEDIATION PROPOSALS OUTSIDE OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM (I.E., THE OAS AND THE PACT OF BOGOTA) THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOH AND THE GOES WILL PROBABLY GRIND TO A HALT WITH NO APPARENT PROSPECTS OF EARLY RESUMPTION. END SUMMARY.

1. GENERAL LOPEZ SADLY RELATED THE CHAIN OF EVENTS WHICH

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LED TO THE APPARENT BREAKDOWN IN NEGOTIATIONS AND CONFIDED

THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR ANY SIGNIFICANT BREAKTHROUGH NOW SEEMED DIMMER THAN EVER. HE PRAISED THE UNSTINTING EFFORTS OF FONMIN CESAR A. BATRES IN HELPING TO DEVELOP A POSITION WHICH COULD AT LEAST BE BROUGHT BEFORE BOTH GOVERNMENTS, BUT ADDED THAT THE GOH GOVERNING COUNCIL HAD BECOME GENERALLY CONVINCED THAT THE PROPOSAL PRESENTED BY BATRES HAD TWO SERIOUS DEFICIENCIES. ONE IS THAT IT REQUIRED RATIFICATION BY BOTH GOVERNMENTS BEFORE PROCEEDING (AN IMPOSSIBLE REQUIREMENT, ACCORDING TO LOPEZ). THE SECOND WAS THAT IT SEEMED TO REQUIRE THAT HONDURAS SURRENDER ALL ITS OPTIONS AND AVAILABLE REMEDIES UNDER "EXISTING INTER-AMERICAN AGREEMENTS INCLUDING THE PACT OF BOGOTA." HE SAID THAT THE COUNCIL HAD SIFTED ADVICE PRESENTED BY SUBSTANTIAL HONDURAN JURISTS AND THAT ALTHOUGH THESE LATTER PRESENTATIONS HAD NOT BEEN UNANIMOUS THE MORE FORCEFUL AND MORE CONVINCING ONES WERE THOSE WHICH ARGUED THAT IT WOULD TAKE VERY LITTLE FOR THE OPPOSITION ELEMENTS (I.E., POLITICAL PARTIES, PRESS AND RADICAL GROUPS) TO CONVINCE THE HONDURAN PEOPLE THAT THEY HAD BEEN SOLD OUT AND THAT THEIR OPTIONS HAD BEEN CAST AWAY UNNECESSARILY AND PREMATURELY.

2. GENERAL LOPEZ STRESSED SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE MEETING THAT FONMIN BATRES AGREED THAT THE DRAFT PROPOSAL FAILED TO PROTECT ALL OF THE HONDURAN OPTIONS BUT THAT HE HAD UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS MUCH WAS GIVEN WHEN HE WAS ASKED TO ATTEMPT TO FORMULATE A DRAFT CALLING FOR IMMEDIATE THIRD PARTY MEDIATION. HE SAID TO THE COUNCIL - AND LATER PRIVATELY TO GENERAL LOPEZ - THAT ALTHOUGH THE ARGUMENTS OPPOSING THE DRAFT PROPOSAL WERE JURIDICALLY SOUND, THE REFUSAL OF THE CABINET TO ACCEPT IT PLACED HIM IN AN UNTENABLE POSITION AND THAT THEREFORE HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO RESIGN.

3. I ASKED THE GENERAL IF HE THOUGHT THAT THE REJECTION OF THE DRAFT PROPOSAL BY THE GOH COULD CONCEIVABLY BE SEEN ELSEWHERE AS A "LAST MINUTE SLEIGHT-OF-HAND (TRUCO) BY THE GOH WHO, AFTER HAVING LEAD THE GOES DOWN THE PATH TOWARD MEDIATION HAD CHANGED ITS MIND AT THE LAST MINUTE." THE GENERAL OFFERED THAT IT WAS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT QUITE PROBABLE. HOWEVER, HE ADDED THAT GIVEN ALL POLITICAL AND SECRET

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PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS TOGETHER, HE COULD SEE HOW IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO GAIN A CABINET CONSENSUS IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSAL AS IT STANDS. AGAIN, HE ADDED THAT BATRES AGREED.

4. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION, THE GENERAL COULD NOT READILY SAY WHAT THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE BUT HE OFFERED THAT HE MUST IMMEDIATELY APPOINT A NEW FONMIN AND INSTRUCT HIM TO CARRY THE MATTER FORWARD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. COMMENT: THE GENERAL SEEMED QUITE CONSCIOUS OF THE

WANING HOURS OF THE PACT OF BOGOTA'S APPLICABILITY TO
EL SALVADOR (ERGO, THE IMMEDIATE NEED FOR HONDURAS TO ACT
UPON ITS REMAINING OPTIONS).

6. ON DEPARTING, I SHARED WITH GENERAL LOPEZ OUR CONCERN
OVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH CONTINUE TO FACE BOTH THE GOH
AND THE GOES, AND SHARED WITH HIM MY APPRECIATION FOR THE
FACT THAT, NOW MORE THAN EVER THE SITUATION CALLS FOR THE
GREATEST POSSIBLE STATESMANSHIP. THE GENERAL THANKED ME
FOR MY GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN AND OFFERED THAT HE WOULD KEEP
ME IN TOUCH WITH SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS.
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